



Innovative Michigan Model Builds Workforce of Educators and Youth Development Staff

Addressing Michigan’s Teacher Shortage with a Grow Your Own Initiative

Michigan is facing an alarming shortage of qualified educators and youth workers across the educational spectrum, including early childhood education and care programs, K–12 schools, and afterschool and summer learning programsⁱ. This shortage is particularly acute as educators seek to address critical needs arising from the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. Rural areas and areas with large populations of low-income families cite the most pressing needs because shortages lead to inequities in access to quality education and care.ⁱⁱ

In response to this challenge, Michigan in 2020 embarked on a new Career and Technical Education and Training pathway, [Future Proud Michigan Educator LAUNCH](#). This is a Grow Your Own initiative with students completing credentials in high school that lead to higher education or immediate employment. Subject matter experts from the Region 8 Comprehensive Center (R8CC) played a critical role in bringing together diverse partners and planning this initiative.

Coordinating Diverse Stakeholders to Plan and Launch Michigan’s Redesigned Pathways

Creating this program required a series of important steps, from setting the groundwork for implementation at the state level to building support among educators and creating an educational pathway for students while in high school. These milestones seemed daunting in 2020, as the state launched the initiative in the midst of the pandemic. One of Michigan’s first steps was to enlist the help of the R8CC to develop resources, facilitate discussion, and support officials through the lengthy design and implementation process. The timeline below provides a summary of the key steps this group took over the course of the project.

Timeline of Key Accomplishments

2019–2020 →	2020–2021 →	2021–2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Created cross-office working group Held first meeting with advisory group Developed recommendations report based on listening sessions with key stakeholders Selected credentials for pathways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formalized a statement of purpose and implementation framework Solidified partnerships Launched redesigned pathways in schools across the state 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Held listening sessions with educators and students to identify areas for additional support Identified metrics to understand initial successes and areas for improvement Updated implementation framework based on lessons learned in initial implementation

Advocates for this program quickly realized the importance of partnership development in setting a strong foundation for success. State education agency staff across different offices often found it challenging to collaborate as it required significant human and organizational capacity and professional development. The diverse players included four different offices from two divisions in the Michigan Department of Education, ranging from career/technical education to early childhood services. Project leaders also recognized the need for



an advisory group spanning early childhood organizations, afterschool organizations, Tribal entities, and other community partners.

During the first year, the R8CC played a critical role in bringing together these stakeholders. Subject matter experts focused on developing relationships and understanding among the cross-office state team, engaging team members in listening sessions to understand their unique assets. R8CC staff also documented learning from internal project team meetings, meetings with the stakeholder advisory group, and listening sessions with advisory group members in a comprehensive recommendations report that would help inform decisions about initial implementation.



Source: [Future Proud Michigan Educator LAUNCH website](#)

In a significant achievement from this early work, stakeholders selected the Child Development Associate credential and Michigan Youth Development Associate Credential as targets for high school students interested in careers in early education and youth programming. In the second year, R8CC staff helped the team develop a statement of purpose and revisit it at each meeting as the team prepared for initial implementation of the new pathway.

Launching the pathways in fall 2021, state leaders encountered several challenges but developed the collective expertise to address them. Many educators knew little about the pathways and had to build their content knowledge, something R8CC staff learned by listening to educators and students. Based on this input, R8CC staff helped to clarify implementation frameworks and continued to support partnerships with an eye toward educator support and, ultimately, sustainability.

In fall 2021, the redesigned pathways formally launched across the state and R8CC staff helped evaluate its early implementation. Listening sessions during the first year found that many educators needed additional support to integrate requirements of the credentials into their programs. New to the pathways, many educators had to build their own content knowledge around the birth to Grade 12 education spectrum. To address these challenges, R8CC staff supported the team in assessing implementation by seeking input from teachers and students, clarifying the implementation framework, and helping to solidify partnerships with key organizations for educator support and, ultimately, sustainability.

Signs of the Program’s Impact on Student Interest in Becoming Michigan Teachers

The state achieved important early and mid-range outcomes with Region 8 CC assistance. Early in the project, the team met several major goals, such as increasing project team knowledge of evidence-based considerations of expanded pathways and a clear understanding of project team roles and responsibilities.

Everyone on our team serves a unique role that is valued by the other members. It is the best team of people I have worked with in my career.

– Michigan Department of Education staff member

Other key outcomes included an increased capacity of the state to support districts in implementing the initiative, to monitor and improve the pathway, and to build stakeholder capacity to partnership with the state. As further evidence of strong communication with stakeholders, the state formalized partnerships with sponsors of these credentials, the Michigan AfterSchool Partnership and the Council for Professional Recognition.



I have learned better communication practices from my team. I have increased confidence in delivering our initiative to our stakeholders, and I am able to reframe my thought process to achieve better outcomes.

– Michigan Department of Education staff member

Next Steps for the Project

Now in Year 4 of the initiative, the team continues to focus on capturing key findings to inform future cross-office work within the Michigan Department of Education and to support other states in similar efforts. The state office project lead described the success of the cross-office partnership this way in the quote box below.

Because of this project and Region 8 CC, a great multi-office collaborative working relationship has formed around credentialing for the first time. More important is that it bridges across early childhood and K–12 and unifies into one system of support.

– Michigan Department of Education staff member

Today, more than 80% of Michigan’s intermediate school districts are implementing the initiative, with more than 1,500 career/technical education students entering into the state’s professional development registry. In their own words, three high school students summarized their strong positive views of this program:

- *This program really opens your eyes to why children act the way they do at all ages. You also gain so much experience in different kinds of classrooms, so you learn a lot about where you really want to go as an educator.*
- *In the beginning I wasn’t really sure about education, but this class has shown me that I want to be a teacher!*
- *It’s really fun to see different teaching styles and have kids come to you for help like you’re a real teacher. It is the best part of my week.*

ⁱ [Sorenson, P. 2022, January. Confronting Michigan's Early Childhood Workforce Crisis. Michigan League for Public Policy.](#)

ⁱⁱ [Ryznar, T., N. Tucker-Bradway, S. Hodgman, A. Dang, & A.-M. Faria. 2021. Limited Choices and Long Drives: Living in Rural Michigan with Young Children.](#)

From a Participant’s Perspective ...

Although the program typically takes 2 years to complete, several students have earned a credential and moved on to higher education and employment with great success. One early participant said her participation in high school gave her a tremendous advantage in college.

“I was seeing how the content we were learning—how I had already done that in the classroom. I had an edge. I felt comfortable and confident that I can go off and do this on my own one day.”

When asked about her career aspirations, she smiled broadly and described a career that spanned both early childhood and K–12 education:

“I would love to end up in a PreK or kindergarten classroom, and I also hope to continue to use my credential to work with infants/toddlers over the summers. I fell in love.”

About Us

The Region 8 Comprehensive Center (R8CC) is one of 19 Regional CCs in the Comprehensive Center (CC) Network that provides high-quality, intensive capacity-building technical assistance to clients from state, regional, and local educational agencies and schools in Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio. R8CC staff serve clients by helping to identify, implement, and sustain effective evidence-based programs, practices, and interventions that support improved educator and student outcomes. Through these capacity-building services, R8CC staff help agency staff improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, and improve the quality of instruction. Because the R8CC is a federally funded CC, all our work with education agencies is conducted free of any charge for services or related travel.

For more information visit our website at www.region8cc.org.

The contents of this document were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education through the Office of Program and Grantee Support Services (PGSS) within the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE), by the Region 8 Comprehensive Center at ICF under Award #S283B190013. This contains resources that are provided for the reader's convenience. These materials may contain the views and recommendations of various subject matter experts as well as hypertext links, contact addresses, and websites to information created and maintained by other public and private organizations. The U.S. Department of Education does not control or guarantee the accuracy, relevance, timeliness, or completeness of any outside information included in these materials. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Education. No official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education of any product, commodity, service, enterprise, curriculum, or program of instruction mentioned in this document is intended or should be inferred.